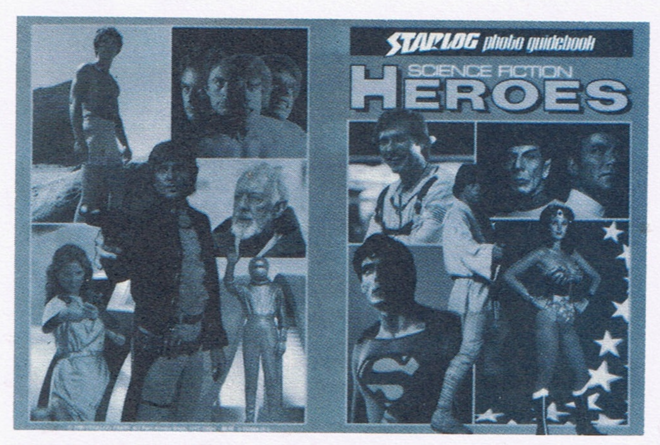
STARLOG photo guidebook

SCIENCE FICTION HEROES





ON THE COVERS: Front—center: Luke Skywalker. Clockwise from left: Buck Rogers, Mr. Spock, James Kirk, Wonder Woman, Superman. Back—center: Apollo. Clockwise from left: Man from Atlantis, Bruce Banner and The Hulk, Obi-Wan Kenobi, Klaatu, Jessica.

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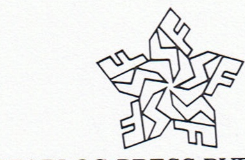
SCIENCE FICTION HEROES

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Introduction

A hero is not just a main character; he or she is an author's conception of an ideal human being in action. For an audience or a reader, a hero is an image to look up to, an encouragement, a reminder of the best in all of us.

But heroes are not always welcome.

So-called sophisticates sneer at them, call them juvenile and unrealistic. Critics of movies and books kill heroes by ignoring them and praising underdogs instead. Some psychologists have even called heroes in fiction dangerously removed from reality.

But science-fiction writers, for the most part, have held fast to a vision of competent, intelligent, moral, unstoppable larger-than-life activists in pursuit of monumental goals.

Science fiction is about new ideas, technologies, machines, and how they affect individuals and civilizations. In science-fiction, an imaginary situation—a future or an alien world—generally comes first. Stories and plots grow out of the invented times and places, and characters emerge from the stories. In the most common SF plot, an all-powerful force must either be destroyed or protected—or everybody dies. This plot automatically produces a chief destroyer or protector—the hero.

To the extent that a character is an ideal—at the action core of the plot and in the hearts of the author and the audience—that character is a hero.

What is a human ideal? What constitutes lofty moral behavior?

Authors answer these question— either deliberately or subconsciously —according to their deepest private beliefs, and there is far from universal agreement on matters of ethics. In Ayn Rand's famous book *Atlas Shrugged*—about the collapse of America when men of creative ability refuse to produce—the heroes always act first out of self-interest; while in the George Pal movie, *When Worlds Collide*, the heroes are motivated by self-sacrifice—far more concerned about the salvation of others of the human race than themselves.

Consider this controversial act of heroism from *When Worlds Collide*:

Professor Hendron, at the climax of the movie, refuses to allow Mr. Stanton to board a space ship—a futuristic Noah's Ark—about to depart for a new planet, just as our Earth is being destroyed. "The new world is for the young," Hendron tells the elderly tyrannical man he has just condemned to death; "We're that extra fuel they'll need."

Would everyone consider this a moral and heroic act? Stanton—a man who has abided by his agreements to the letter, even in the face of public ridicule—not only *owns* most of that ship, he has a contract guaranteeing him a place among the survivors. If anyone has a *right* to make that trip, it is certainly Stanton.

Of course, no one ever mourns for Stanton—nor could they: he's a thoroughly unpleasant character. In the context of *When Worlds Collide*—a modern Biblical parable relying on classical Biblical ethics—Stanton represents the essence of

George Lucas' Star Wars *had heroes and action aplenty with Luke, Princess Leia, Chewbacca and Han Solo.*



evil: the man incapable of sacrificing himself for others. But is he a villain or a victim?

Star Wars is the most heroic film of recent decades; but even there heroism is not always clear-cut. An odd (but not terribly serious) ambiguity affects Luke Skywalker's heroism. If Luke is set on his path against his will, if he is being used by the Force and manipulated by Ben Kenobi, and if he goes off to war merely because his guardians are dead and he has no alternative—then his heroism shrinks. Because to be truly heroic, a character must *choose* the right road, over easier courses of action.

However, if Luke—passionately desiring to become a pilot and join the Rebel Alliance—exercises independent judgment, then his heroism is of a higher caliber.

Heroes are not all alike. They appeal to different people in different ways.

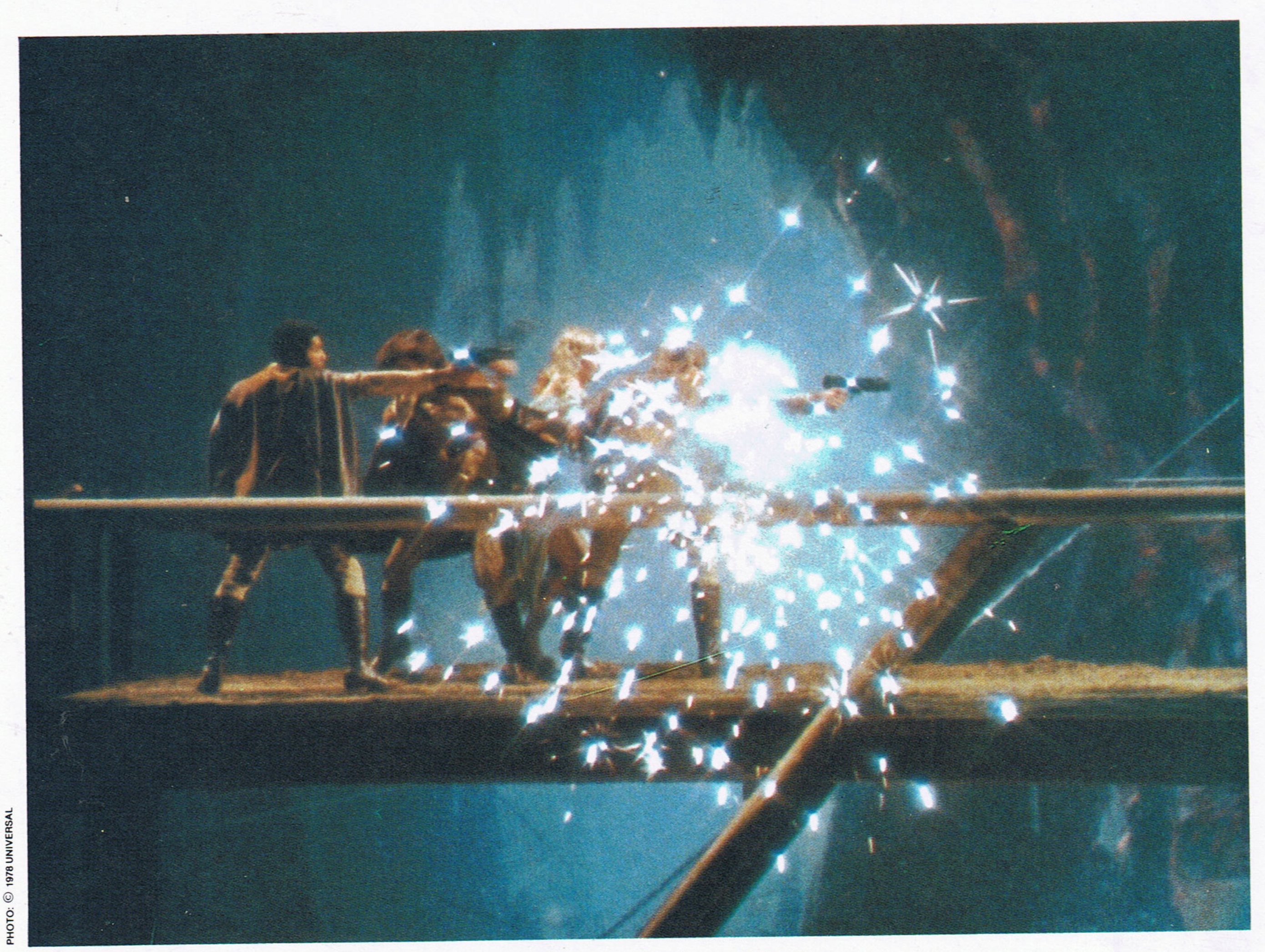
Of all the reasons science-fiction authors may have had for hanging on to heroes all these years, one in particular seems the most noble: To endure, civilization *needs* heroes.

If you have ever cried, or have come near it, upon witnessing deserved success, then you know that this is true. One cries at such a time (whether at a fictional or factual event) not because the success is sad, but in protest of the fact that one sees triumph so seldom.

Cry at the triumphant climax of *Star Wars*, and you are saying that life could be, and ought to be, like this—but it so seldom is! Yet you leave the theater elevated, inspired, because you have been reminded that however infrequently heroes win, they *can* win. Which means *you* can win. Which means that heroic attempts are worthwhile after all. Which means that life and progress and happiness are possible. Not



The triumphant return to the rebel base after the destruction of the Deathstar in Star Wars.



The heroic Colonial warriors escape from the villainous Ovions in Battlestar Galactica.

guaranteed, just possible.

The noblest thing a writer can do is to say to a potentially capable person, "You can do it!" And there is no kind of writer in a better position to understand the importance of the hero to the advancement of mankind than the science-fiction writer who tries to see the universe in broadest terms and to interpret social-technological rises and falls. Where there are no heroes—no individuals saying "I can do it"—there are no rises, only falls.

And still, heroes are not for everybody. Some still consider them kid stuff. A good many people resent fictional heroes. A person who sees no heroism in himself can generalize and decide that there is no such thing as a hero. There'd *better* be no such thing, because such people gave up trying to be heroic long ago; now they can't look up without being reminded how far down they are. This book is not for them.

The following pages celebrate characters from science fiction that are conspicuously inspiring or fun to look up to. They are all individuals who have done their utmost to be moral and courageous in their relentless pursuit of values; yet they are as different from each other as you are from your best friends.

There is no attempt here to be all-inclusive, only representative. Heroes in a series of stories tend to eclipse the stories and become the theme of the work; they have been stressed over individual heroes from isolated works. This excursion into science-fiction heroism makes no attempt at criticism of the literary skills of the creators—which range from hack to mastery. And movies and TV shows take precedence over literature because this is, after all, a picture book.

Alert the hero in your soul, then, and prepare to meet well-remembered friends and perhaps some extraordinary humans you'll want to learn more about. . . . ★

JAMES T. KIRK

Captain, now Admiral, of the starship *Enterprise*, Kirk heroically balances responsibility for the smooth operation of a self-sustaining world traveling beyond the speed of light, concern for the welfare of a crew numbering over 400, love and friendship for his teammates on the bridge, and duty to the Federation and his missions.

Kirk is the quintessential leader—as at home in administration as when brandishing a lethal weapon.

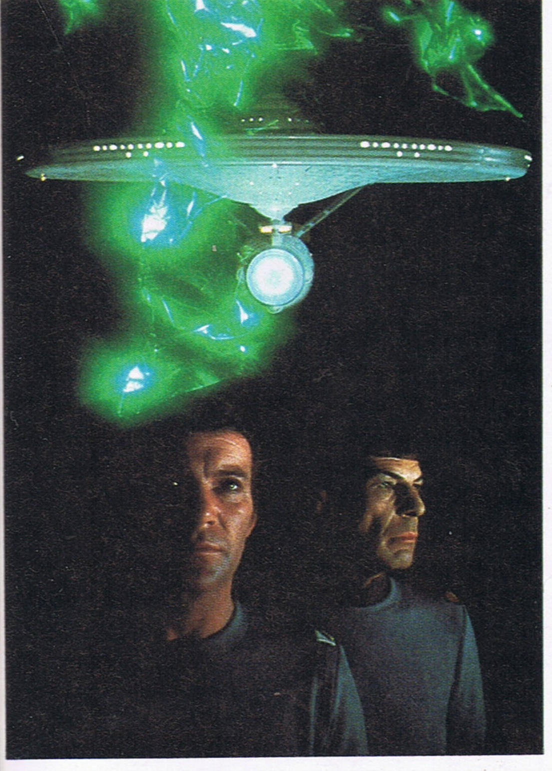
"I'm in command," he explains in "Return to Tomorrow." "I could order this, but I won't—because Dr. McCoy is right in pointing out the enormous danger potential in any contact with life and intelligence as fantastically advanced as this. But I must point out that the possibility, the potential, for knowledge and advancement is equally great. Risk— risk is our business. That's what this starship is all about. That's why we are aboard her."

In contrast to Spock—who represents logic and reason mellowed now and again by a flicker of emotion—Kirk is the emotionally involved side of humanity, with his feelings always guided by reins of rationality.

Kirk is humankind at its zenith. ★

Mr. Spock, Capt. Kirk and Dr. McCoy face V'ger—the film's evil force.





MR. SPOCK

Paragon of the intellect. Hero to all who know that the search for truth requires the cautious, precise, unremitting application of logic. The Vulcan science officer of the starship *Enterprise* is a symbol of the virtue of thought.

Cool as his pronouncements are, mechanical as his attention to duty seems—the emotions inherited from his human mother lend his actions the color of caring; and his fidelity to his ship and the Federation bear the mark of true allegiance.

Courageous, intrepid, dignified—these words apply to Spock as they apply to all orderly and questing minds. ★

Left: Kirk, Spock and the new Enterprise. *Below: Spock with tricorder.*



PIERRE ARONNAX

Renowned scientist from the National Museum in Paris, **Pierre Aronnax of Jules Verne's** *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, travels to San Francisco to personally investigate reports of a monster that destroys ships while all hands are aboard. Unconcerned by any thought of personal danger, he is excited at the prospect of unraveling a scientific mystery. Later, when given the choice of staying with Nemo to learn the secret of the *Nautilus*, but only at the expense of his companions' lives, he chooses instead to join his compatriots rather than to lend the power of his mind to a man whose only purpose in life is vengeance. **Aronnax's sense of morality is as** finely defined as are the rigorous laws of science to which he has devoted his life. ★



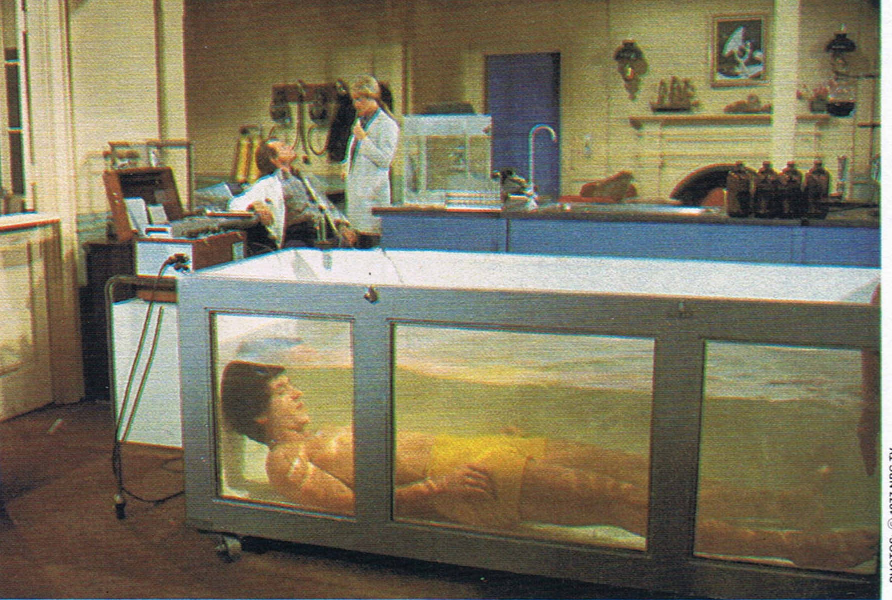
Top: Pierre Aronnax, Ned Land, Conseil and Captain Nemo on the deck of the Nautilus. *Center: Pierre Aronnax considers, briefly, Nemo's offer to share his secrets of the sea in exchange for life-long imprisonment. Bottom: Harper Goff, Pierre Aronnax and Conseil try to book passage to Saigon in hopes of learning the truth behind the reports of a marauding "sea monster."*

THE MAN FROM ATLANTIS

A stranger in the world of humanity who has no memory of his past, his people or his own world; a water-breathing man with physical limitations on land—Mark Harris nevertheless keeps his wits about him as he seeks his roots and tries to bring sanity and justice to the alien universe of Man.

As given life by actor Patrick Duffy, the man from Atlantis shows young manhood at its most capable—with eyes that see through subterfuge, a quick mind unwilling to distort the truth and a body like a well-tuned instrument of action.

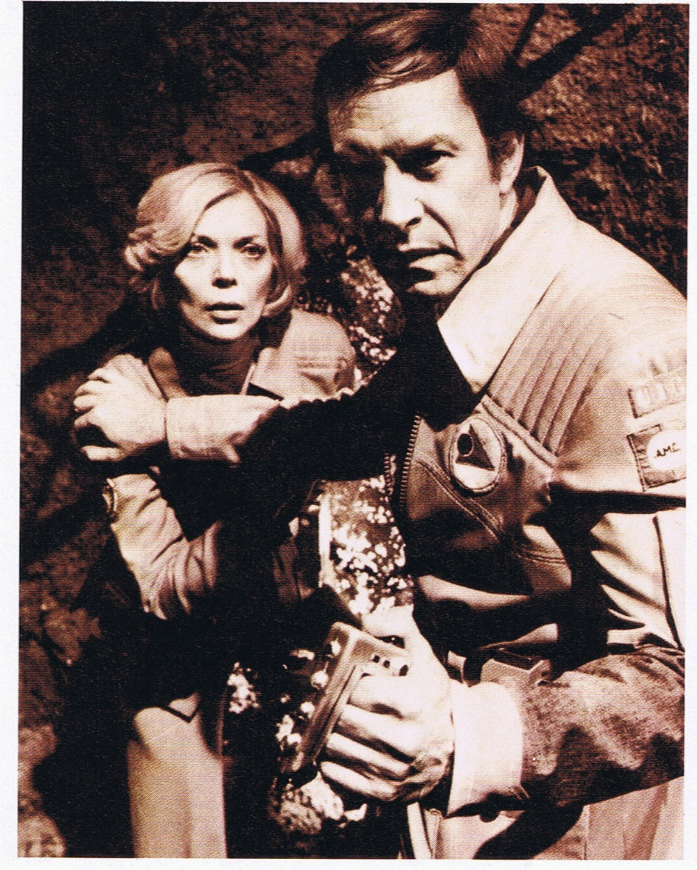
While his non-human perspective allows us to see ourselves as others might see us, his attitudes and behavior serve as a fine model for human honesty and purposefulness. ★



Above: Mark Harris, the man from Atlantis, with spiny sea friends. Right: Mark relaxes in his own version of a waterbed.

JOHN KOENIG

Thrust into a lonely position of leadership he never wanted, in an ongoing emergency no one on Earth ever expected, *Space: 1999*'s Commander John Koenig of Moonbase Alpha endeavors always to maintain equilibrium and peace among his people—castaways all, on an errant Moon, never to return home again. He furthers the quest they all share: to find a habitable planet on which to establish a colony—a new Earth. Through adventures alien and eerie, John Koenig is ideally the commander fate has made him. ★









Top: John and Helena face danger in "New Adam, New Eve." Above and right: John at ready and in action.



DR. HELENA RUSSELL

Solid, stolid, inventive and reliable, Helena Russell handles the medical and biological emergencies that arise in the most hostile environment of all—one that is entirely man-made. At Moonbase Alpha—where the oddest of ailments can afflict her companions, she distinguishes herself as a medical scientist of both the physical and the psychological. What distinguishes her as a woman are her courage in a terrifying situation, her warmth toward her fellow travelers among the stars and her intense desire to see a problem through, unswervingly, to its demanding conclusion. ★

Top: John and Helena in "Brian the Brain." Above: John and Helena face dangers both perilous and eerie.



CLAYTON FORESTER

Suave and dignified, Dr. Clayton Forester—a scientist from Cal Tech on a fishing holiday—happens to be near the scene when the first Martian cylinder lands in California, and *The War of the Worlds* begins. His scientist's curiosity, his awed admiration for technological advancement and his certainty that he might have the expertise needed in humanity's most frightening hour . . . these things direct him and involve him to the bitter end. He could not have been capable of walking away from the terrifying challenge.

His courage never flags; and a clue to the source of it comes early in the struggle when Forester and the others are in a military dugout watching the emergence of the first triad of war machines. Sylvia van Buren, Forester's adoring and brave companion, is terrified by what she sees; her Uncle Matthew is troubled by the obvious power of the Martian machines; military leaders are grimly set on pouncing at the first sign of aggression; but Clayton Forester watches the ascending, graceful, silent, lethal machines, smiles and says with profound delight, "This is amazing!" ★





Top: Forester and van Buren flee from their downed plane. Middle: In the bunker, Forester explains humanity's chances. Bottom: They peer in fascination at the Martians and their machines.

KLAATU

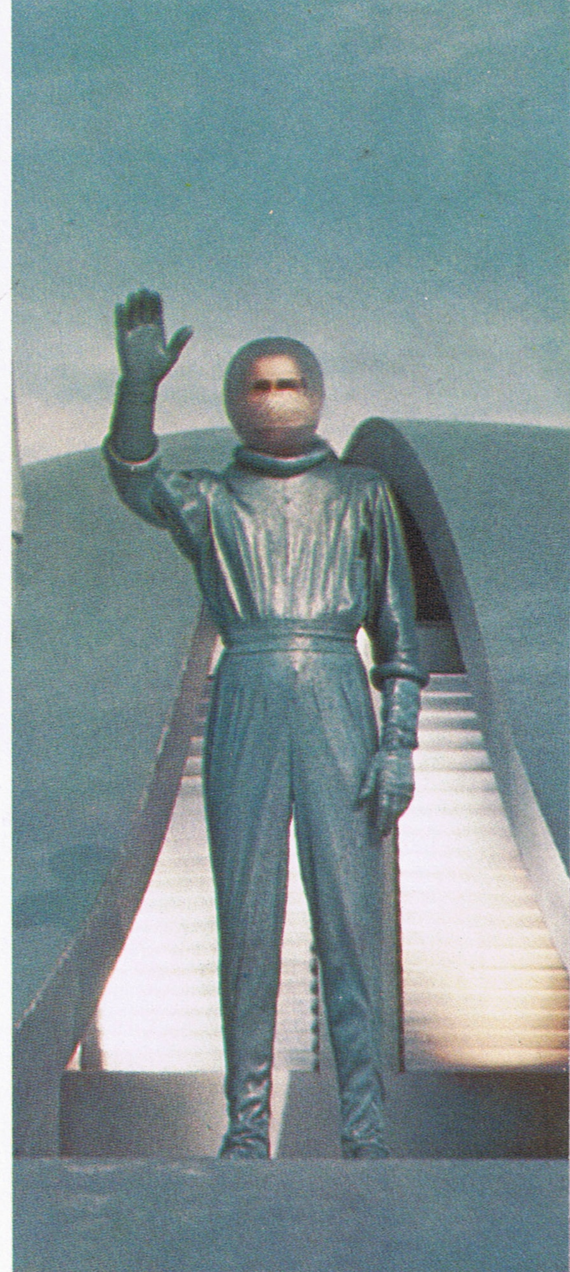
One of the most mature and realistic of science-fiction idols, Klaatu—representative of an advanced planetary alliance—travels an astronomical distance, alone except for his insensate companion, Gort, to deliver a warning against irrationality. "Learn to live in peace . . . or face the consequence . . . utter annihilation."

Klaatu is aware of human potential—as shown by his affection for the boy, Bobby; respectful of genius—as shown by his behavior toward Dr. Barnhardt; and admiring of the best of the world's ideals—as demonstrated at the Lincoln Memorial.

Yet he remains unshaken in his mission and single-minded in his task on our primitive Earth.

In looking up to him, the characters in *The Day the Earth Stood Still*—and the film's audiences as well—are admiring the qualities of inner peace, absolute self-assurance and purposefulness. The qualities of the ultimate rational man. Not rational to the exclusion of emotions, but rationality blended with emotionality. The epitome of control. ★







Michael Rennie as Klaatu comes to this planet to present a message of peace; Sam Jaffe as Professor Barnhardt, above.





RIPLEY

Ripley is a survivor. A woman in a tough trade, second in command of a deep-space manufacturing facility—a nerve-wrackingly responsible position—she succeeds and grows by gut determination.

Sensible (and she knows it), she most clearly senses the danger in hosting the alien and instructs that it not be brought aboard. Her rightness is tragically borne out by the loss of her crew and the utter destruction of her ship.

But it is in the last few minutes of her adventure that we see how she functions, how her gut determination operates, as she settles on a last-ditch plan of action and carries it out with dispatch and efficiency—and a sheer panic that never slows her down. ★



Which is the true survivor type in Alien*: the efficiently determined Ripley or the hard-to-kill creature?*

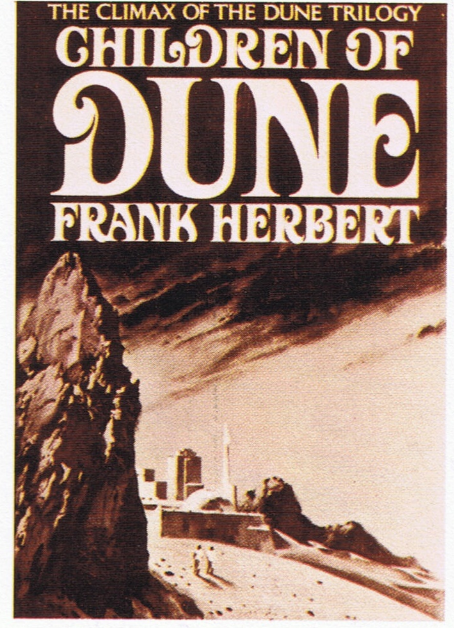


WONDER WOMAN

The original Wonder Woman of the comics—a grimly serious lady swashbuckler, an all-but-immortal Amazon princess out to rid the world of evil—has been transformed for television. In the hands of Universal Pictures, CBS and actress Linda Carter, she of the magic lasso and bullet-deflecting bracelets is aloof but light-hearted, witty but dedicated . . . very much an invention of the late 20th century.

Cool but capable of caring, Wonder Woman devotes her prowess and her powers to the salvation of rational beings (not always human); and, in her disguise as Diana Prince, she maintains a proud twinkle in her eyes that tells her audience (but never her adversaries) that there is more of importance behind those dowdy glasses than the world will ever know. ★

Above: Wonder Woman hangs from a helicopter. Right: She preens her cape of stars and bars.





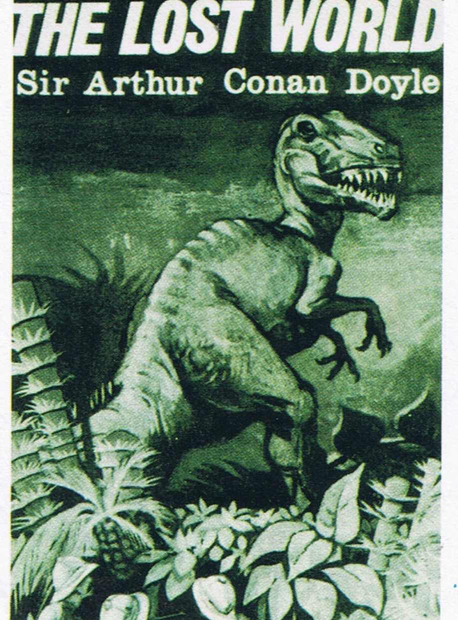
PAUL (MAUD'DIB) ATREIDES

It is not age nor position nor military strength that makes Paul Atreides the leader of a massive revolt against a corrupt Empire. It is his ability, bravery and confidence.

Paul is only 15 years old when his adventure begins, and but a year or two older at its climax. His father's dukedom gains him adherents along the way, but were he unable to prove himself—in intellectual skills, in hand-to-hand combat, in desert survival—his father's royalty would more likely make him a laughing stock than a leader.

Paul possesses mystical powers— a fact that can dehumanize a hero for a reader or an audience—but Paul's magic is learned, considered a natural capacity available to any man or woman with the talent for it. In *Dune*, mysticism is a symbol for genius.

One moment from Paul's life crystalizes his heroism: when he must, for the first time, capture and ride a sandworm—the mammoth killer of the desert. Paul stands ready—ready to be successful or be eaten alive—his hooks outstretched to grip the passing monster. He is more excited than afraid, more sure than doubting, his mind fully alert. The hooks sink in; he pulls himself up, up, up. He stands atop the worm, his cloak whipping in the wind; and he waves triumphantly to his companions below. ★



GEORGE CHALLENGER

Arthur Conan Doyle's great explorer-scientist-hero, Professor George Challenger, is irascible, arrogant, aware of his own supreme worth and irritated with any who may—for even a moment—be unaware of it. He is also convinced that he's the most courageous man alive.

What keeps him from being an insufferable bore is that it is all perfectly true.

He is humble only before the truth. He lives only to discover it. As Doyle's Sherlock Holmes has his Watson, Challenger has his chronicler—Edward Malone, the only journalist Challenger trusts (because Malone openly worships the venerable scientist). In *The Poison Belt*, Malone says of Challenger:

"His appearance was glorious. Not all the turkey cocks in creation could match the slow, high-stepping dignity with which he paraded his own railway station and the benignant smile of condescending encouragement with which he regarded everybody around him."

Challenger is the man who knows himself, the man who knows his worth and cannot sell himself short, the man of lofty pride. ★



NUMBER SIX

"I am not a number; I am a free man!" exclaims The Prisoner. In his certainty of that fact lies his chief heroism.

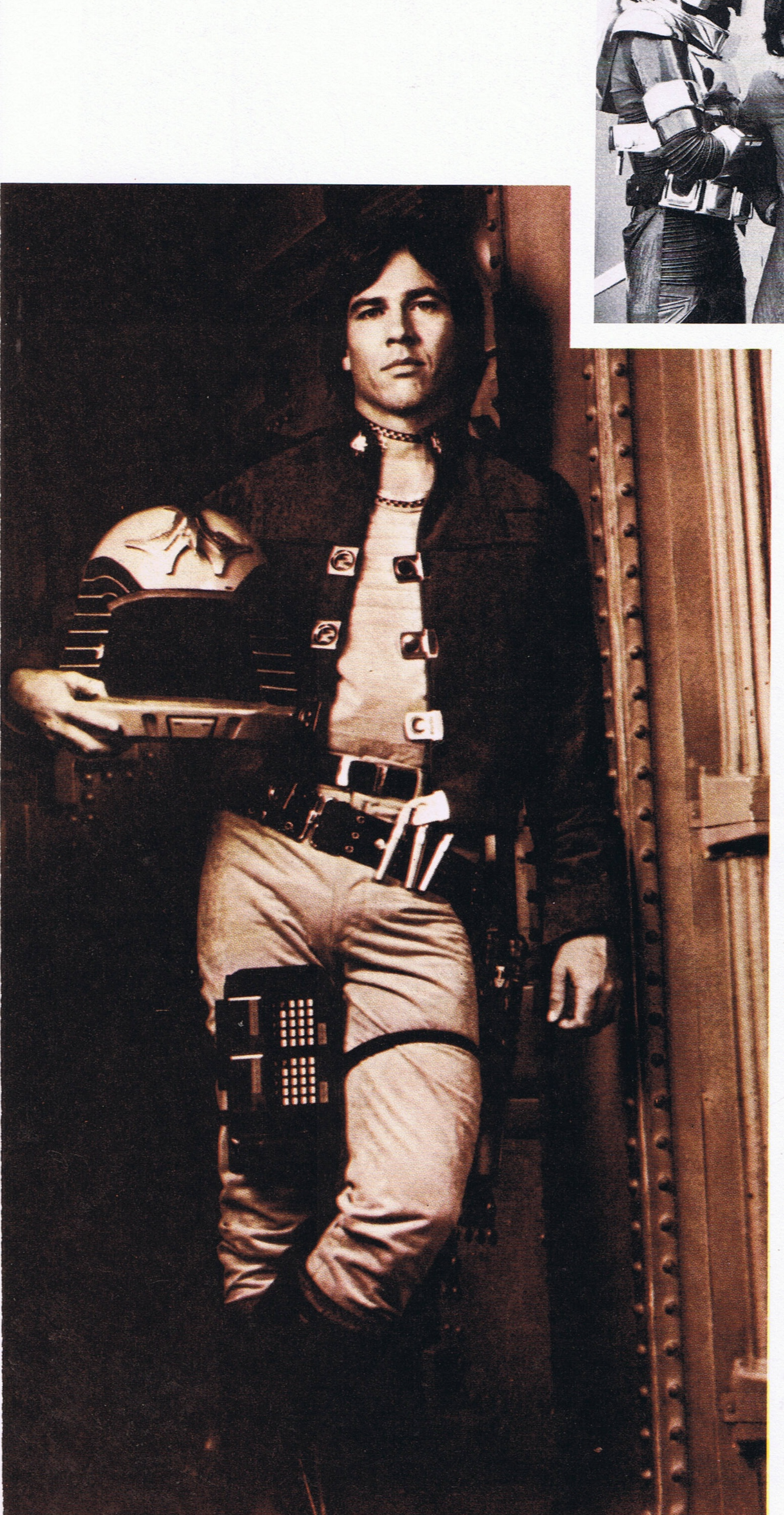
Taken from the life he knows in London, he awakens to find himself in The Village—a self-contained, sunny dictatorship from which there is apparently no escape.

He has no idea why he has been abducted and taken there. They say they "want information." But who are *they*? They claim he is free to do as he pleases—even to run for political office in The Village. But logic operates perversely; in The Village (as in Orwell's *1984*), freedom is slavery and ignorance is strength. Number Six is there to be brainwashed.

He is a man who cannot be broken. Instead, he shatters the smooth running of the bureaucracy merely by standing fast to his identity, never losing sight of the rights they would take away from him.

They can capture, torture, enslave, even kill him; but because of his spiritual integrity, Number Six is the boss. ★

The Prisoner *series had only seventeen episodes. Patrick McGoohan starred as Number 6.*



APOLLO

Spiritual, dedicated, duty-bound, Captain Apollo—astronaut son of Commander Adama—sees beyond the pleasures and pains of everyday life, beyond pettiness. He knows, and constantly acts on the knowledge, that for the Battlestar *Galactica* to prevail he must never relax his vigil against the all-destructive Cylons. ★

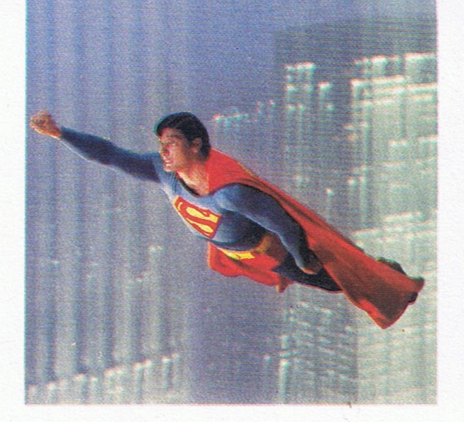
Left: Richard Hatch as Apollo. Above: Apollo and Starbuck in the hands of the Cylons.

STARBUCK

Fun-loving, a jocular jock, Lieutenant Starbuck may lack a philosopher's grasp of a situation, but once a right course is made clear to him he heads in that direction, unswervingly, at once. Carefree and careless, no risk is too great, no task too terrifying, no objective too remote for Starbuck. ★

Right: Dirk Benedick, as Starbuck, escapes the Cylons. Below: Hatch as Apollo.







Superman in the air and on the ground, the ideal superhero. Top right: Superman's father, Jor-el.

SUPERMAN

The archetypical superhero. A fantasy projection of human desires to be invulnerable and all-powerful, Superman's heroics are not those of mortal men—nor are they quite those of gods.

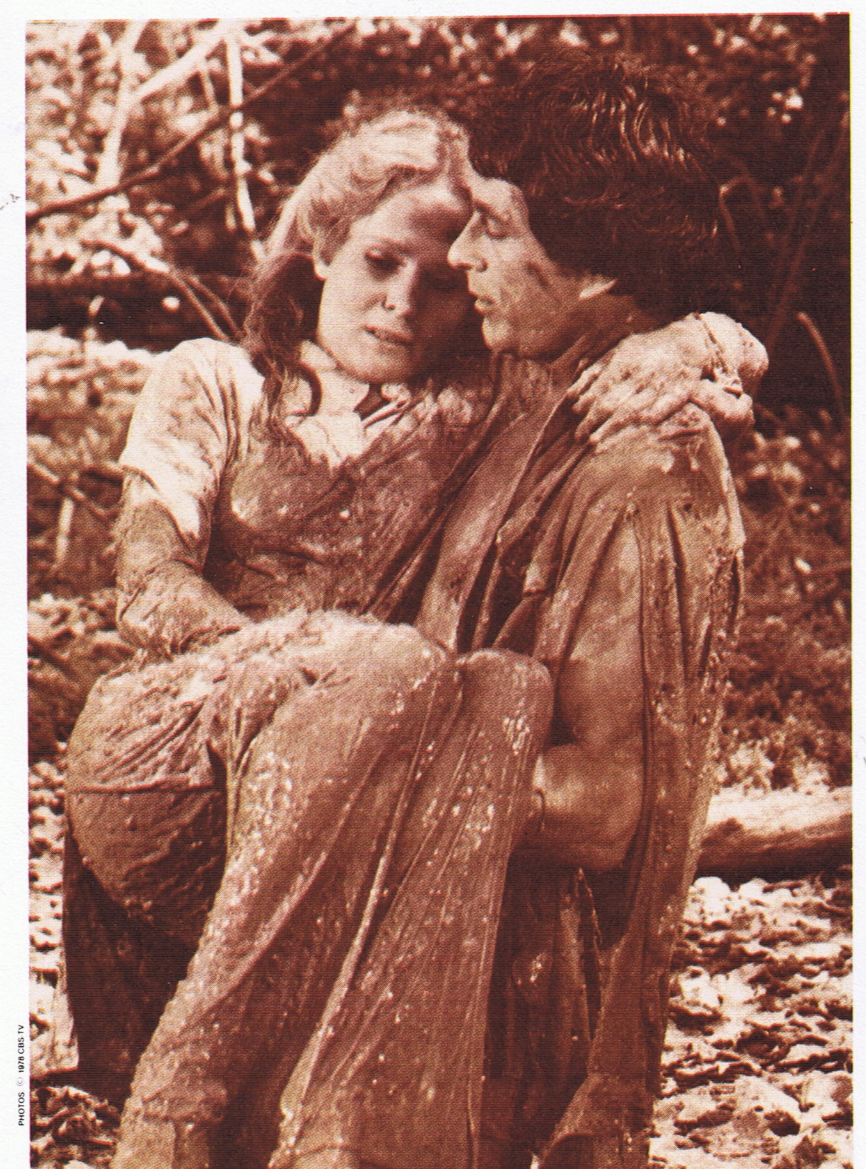
His intellect is not boundless; he can misread a situation and occasionally fail. But the incorruptable Man of Steel wins ultimately because his sense of justice is as perfect as his bulletproof hide; and he never rests until wrong is set right.

In his soul he is but a man—John Carter in reverse: a lonely alien whose new environment, Earth, gives him special and spectacular advantages. He loves, he wants, he acts according to his insights. And a villain with a chunk of his home planet can do him in.

Although we are seldom reminded of it, he has become an avenger, a protector of Earth, out of gratitude: our planet and its people offered him love and life when his world perished.

He fights "the never-ending battle for truth, justice and the American way." In this he is a streamlined folk hero—an ideal for the present and for all time. ★





DAVID BANNER

A lonely wanderer in search of self and soul, David Banner is of a breed rare in television science fiction: the specifically intellectual hero. His frame is slight, his personality quiet; there's no touch of macho about him. His essence is efficacy.

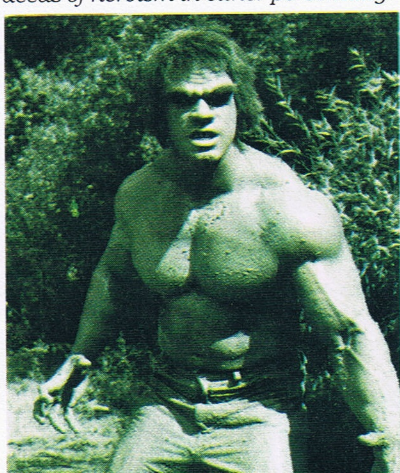
Ironic that he—a scientist and fully rational man—must combat unpredictable metamorphoses into an incredible hulking giant, a creature devoid of mind and acting on the instincts of a raging beast. The Hulk: healthy anger mutated into a frightening physical entity capable of terrific destruction—a monster mitigated by its profound innocence, the innocence of a very small child.

Banner and The Hulk are Jekyll and Hyde without a trace of evil in either personality.

Another man might be driven insane by Banner's helpless situation or by his lapses of memory—and reality. But Banner knows the source of his trouble, knows that he must learn to combat it; and he is relentless in his pursuit of a cure.

Yet he has intellectual power to spare, and boundless sympathy for other lonely and afflicted persons. His adventures invariably involve his solution of *someone else's* problem; and the adventures end (with the show's melancholy music playing over a long shot) with Banner moving on, still unable to solve his own. ★

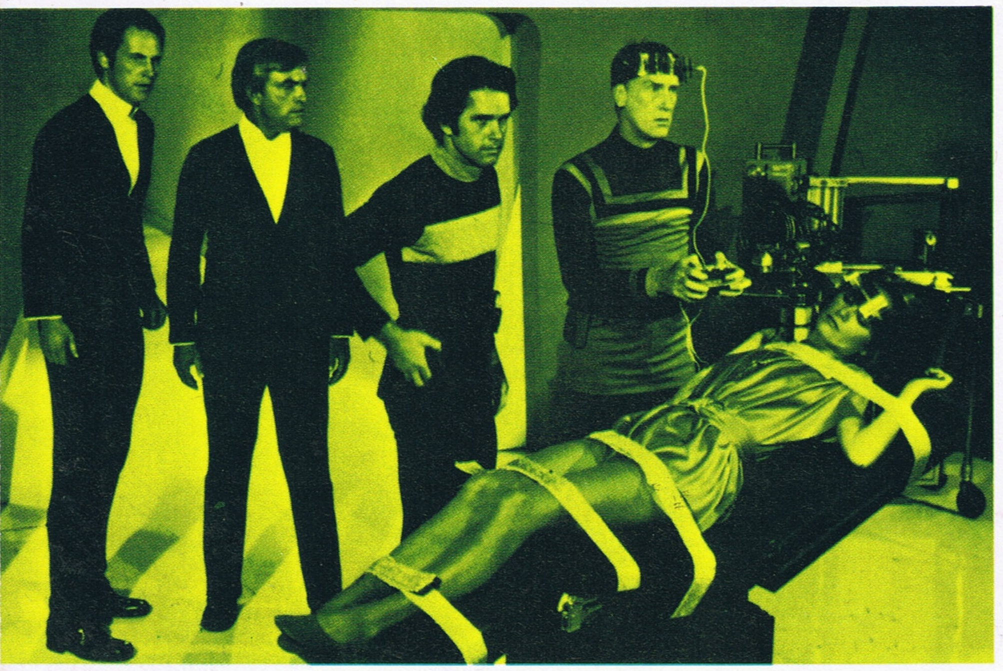
David Banner and The Hulk perform deeds of heroism in either personality.



Logan, Gregory Harrison, and Jessica, Heather Menzies, were patterned very closely to the original movie characters in Logan's Run. Also seen are Donald Moffat as Rem and Keene Curtis as Draco.







LOGAN

Establishment man, servant to computers run by he knows not who, an unwitting killer of the innocent, Logan represents the man whose honesty of thought allows him to change.

Not that Logan has done much thinking in his life; it takes little to follow orders. But he sees; he remembers; he feels. And thanks to Jessica—his guide, whom he comes to love—the facts of life and death under the dome of the City take on new meaning . . . and he begins to see that what he had regarded as good is evil, that the criminals he seeks are innocent.

It may be that others—millions of them—see the facts Logan sees, but only Logan and a few more convert their new-found convictions into action to bring the automated tyranny to its knees.

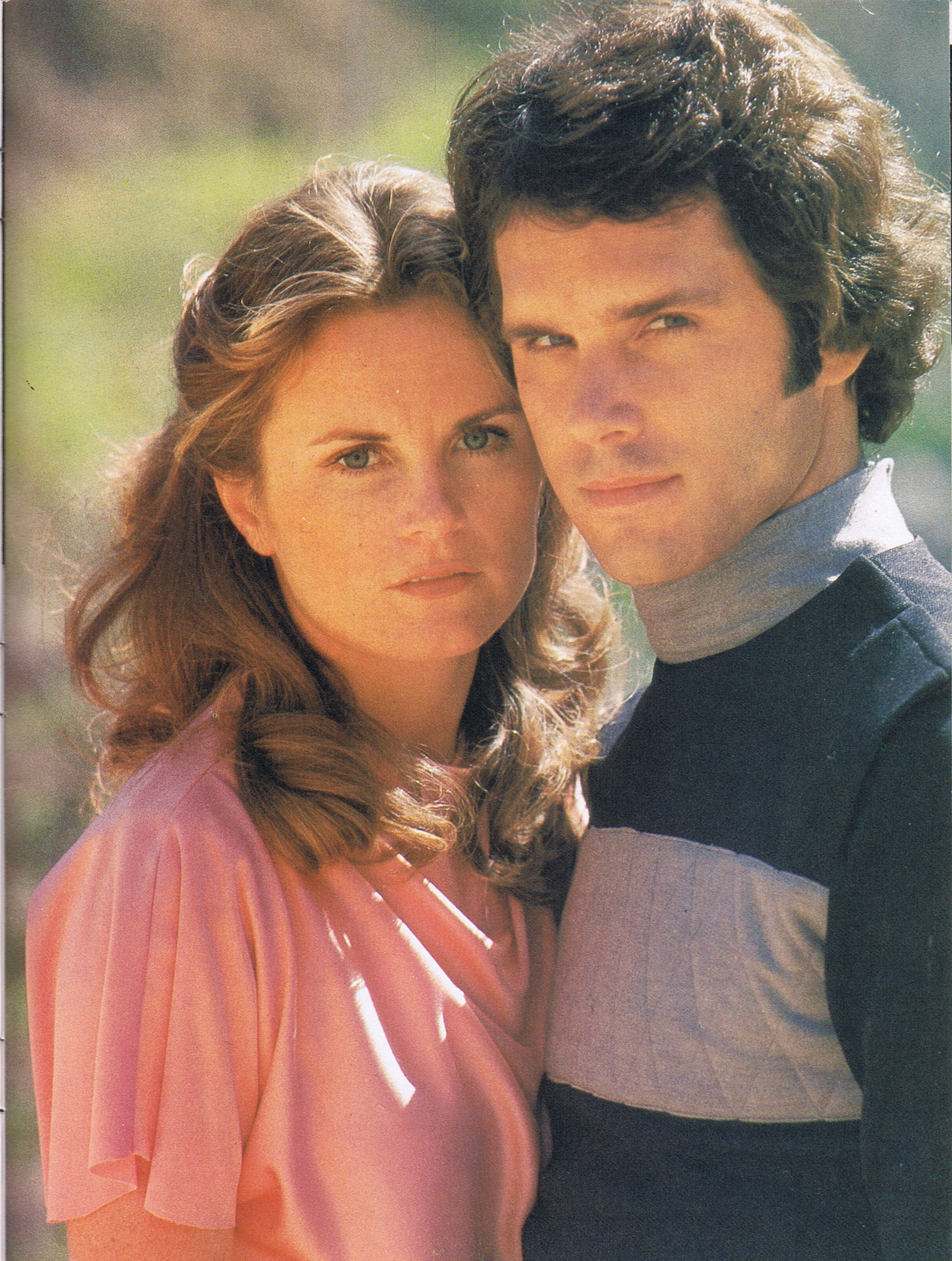
With Logan, comfort and security cannot substitute for truth and freedom. ★

JESSICA

Her world is domed and locked, her life prescribed and dated, her future nonexistent. Yet she has a vision of a better life, a free life, that she cannot let slip through her fingers.

Her time for death approaching, being pursued by Logan and the other Sandmen of death, she joins and leads a pathetically small band of revolutionaries who dream of a vague haven, a sanctuary, a place they are not even sure exists.

Jessica, pursuing so tenuous a dream, glorifies the quest more than the goal. She says to all that a dedication to *some* course of action is better than volunteering to be swallowed by a world you despise. ★



THE DOCTOR

Seven or eight centuries old, a living encyclopedia of the knowledge of all ages, The Doctor is the self-appointed protector of the deserving of our world and all inhabited planets.

His passion for civilization and justice has made him a renegade—a rebel against the great directive of the Council of Time Lords on Gallifrey. The directive: to observe and analyze but never to interfere in the affairs of men, never to attempt to alter the past or influence the future. To The Doctor, the directive is institutionalized cowardice and a committed indifference to war, tyranny, famine and suffering. He'll have no part of it!

In a stolen TARDIS (Time And Relative Dimensions In Space), a faulty and undependable machine, he sets out to right the wrongs of the ages.

His theme: the accumulation of knowledge is the key to survival and successful living.

Impatient with stupidity and indecision, contemptuous of cruelty, and with wisdom as his shield, The Doctor stands so tall above his frightening adventures (he is not immortal, after all) that he can spare a chuckle for trivial absurdities. Extending his little bag of sweets, he asks many an archvillain, "Have a jelly baby?"

Villains may be ridiculous to him, but injustice is never a laughing matter. The almost-human Doctor has two hearts as big as all outdoors. ★

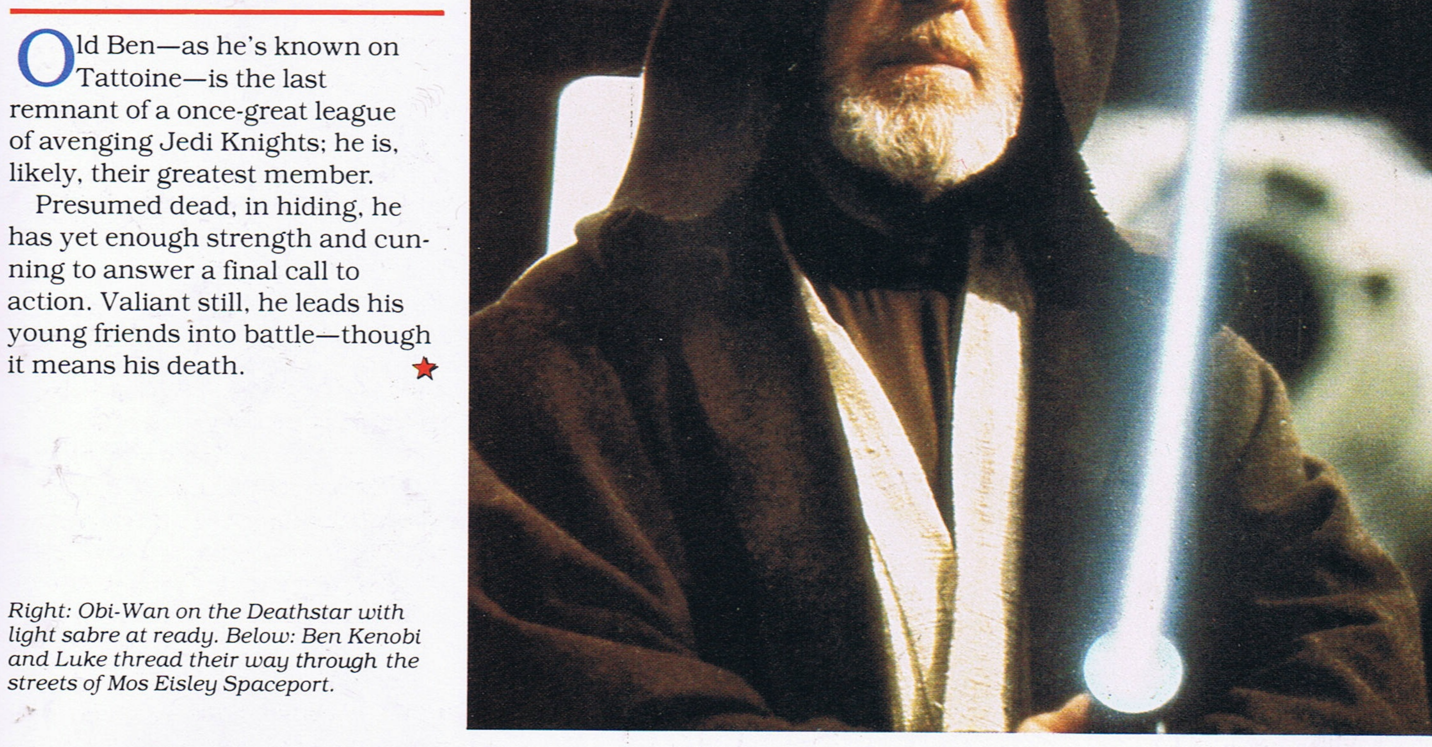


Top: Peter Cushing as The Doctor in Dr. Who and the Daleks. *Left: Tom Baker as The Doctor in "Terror of the Zygons."*

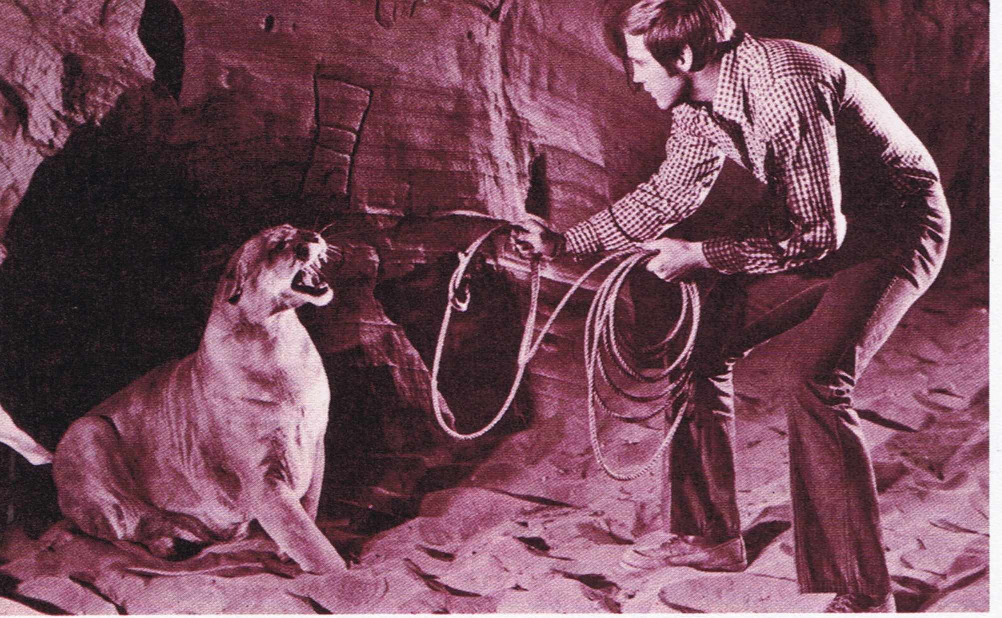
OBI-WAN KENOBI

Old Ben—as he's known on Tattoine—is the last remnant of a once-great league of avenging Jedi Knights; he is, likely, their greatest member.

Presumed dead, in hiding, he has yet enough strength and cunning to answer a final call to action. Valiant still, he leads his young friends into battle—though it means his death. ★



Right: Obi-Wan on the Deathstar with light sabre at ready. Below: Ben Kenobi and Luke thread their way through the streets of Mos Eisley Spaceport.



STEVE AUSTIN

Soft-spoken but grimly determined, an athletic man to begin with, astronaut Steve Austin becomes truly formidable with the addition of his bio-electronic (bionic) parts. Yet he remains more vulnerable than ordinary men: his bionics can fail or be sabotaged. And a bullet in his organic chest or head would be as dangerous for him as for anyone.

Austin is no genius, but his mind and spirit are those of a sincere, independent, sensible man. He is committed to uncovering the truth at any cost and setting things right.

Steve Austin is a handicapped man who has mastered not only his life but his world, through his special strengths and his strength of character. ★

JAIME SOMERS

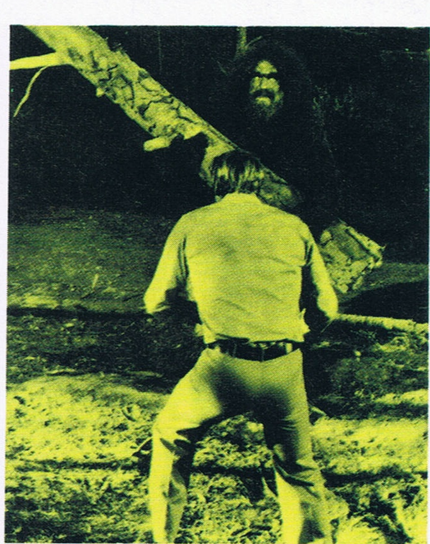
Ms. Somers was created from a rib of *The Six Million Dollar Man*. She shares Steve Austin's physical abilities and disabilities—including a psychological pressure telling her she is not a normal person.

Her great determination is, however, to live the life *she* wants—not the life of a mechanical freak. Somers is a teacher, a small-town girl, a warm and sensuous woman capable of a binding love . . . not just a spy. But once on assignment for Oscar Goldman, her narrow personal concerns are forgotten, and all her perceptiveness, her powers and her prowess are focused on the world-shaking problem at hand.

Jaime Somers loves life—and experiences fear easily; and here lies her great appeal: the fear never stops her. ★

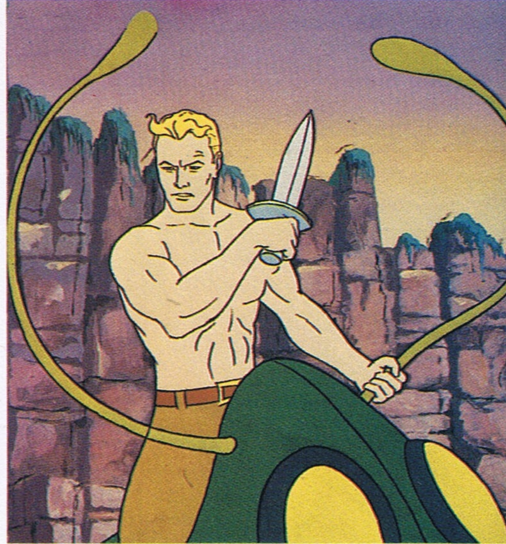
Steve Austin masters his world with his special strengths and his strength of character.





Jaime Somers refuses to live the life of a mechanical freak; she lives the life she wants and loves it.





FLASH GORDON

The Flash Gordon of the Universal serials is virile young America personified—an Eagle Scout, a quarterback, president of the Student Council, most likely to succeed.

Succeed he does, through an unflagging sense of fair play, a feeling for the underdog and a quickness to anger at injustice.

Although he relies on his friend and mentor, Professor Zarkov, for strategies and philosophy, Gordon is his own man always, a man who identifies enemies and potential friends with instant assuredness and leaps into action on the basis of his best judgment—which sometimes is not good enough.

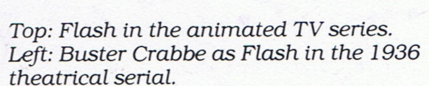
His best trait emerges when his headstrong nature has entrapped him—and usually Dale Arden as well—in a terrible situation.

For Flash, a situation is never hopeless; his mind stays alert and never for a moment mires down in recriminations. Flash Gordon is a gentle, tough, average guy who prevails over adversity by bringing to it never less than his best effort.









Top: Flash in the animated TV series. Left: Buster Crabbe as Flash in the 1936 theatrical serial.



BUCK ROGERS

Like John Carter of Mars, Buck Rogers finds himself a loner in an alien world—but in Rogers' case, the world is his own, 500 years in the future. Everything is similar to the life he knew, but nothing is the same. And he can never go home.

He more than makes the best of things, he masters them.

An astronautical engineer by trade, he finds technology advanced far beyond his knowledge—but not hopelessly beyond. And the people, to him, have regressed, become stolid, passionless, dependent; while Buck retains his dry wit, his strong emotions and his independent spirit.

He is so independent, in fact, that even in his position of disadvantage he refuses to be ordered about. If Wilma Deering or Dr. Huer want something of him, they must convince him of their reasons—and these are the two he trusts most.

Where many an average man, in his shoes, would ask for advice and instruction and sympathy, Buck Rogers seeks out his particular strengths and trades them to advantage among new-found equals. In so doing, he elicits great respect. ★



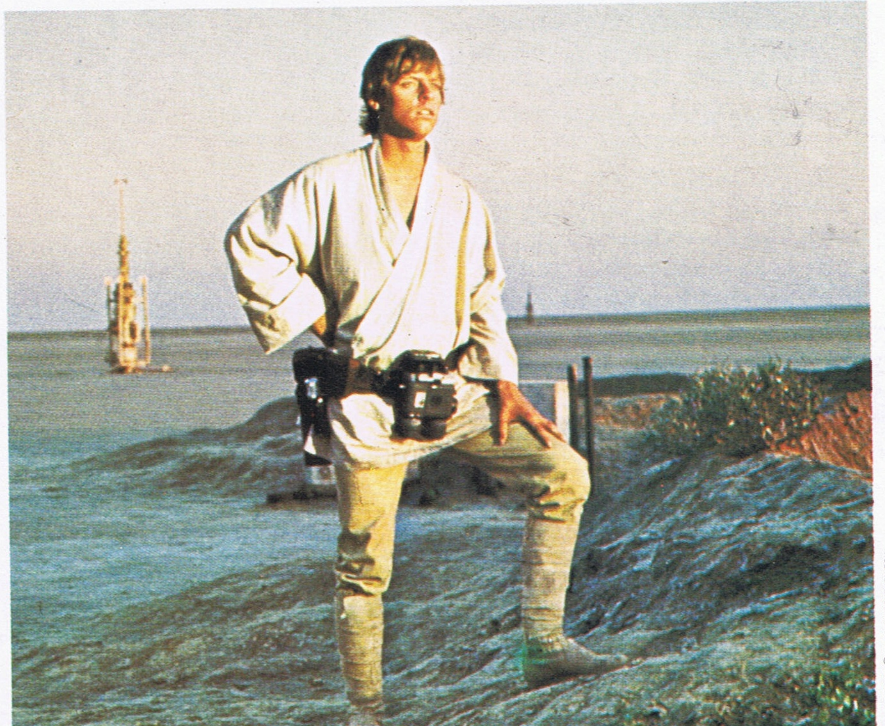
Gil Gerard takes over the role of Buck on the recent TV series. Right: An old hand tells Gerard about the good old days.

LUKE SKYWALKER

A boy with a clear vision of manhood and the road he must travel to attain it, Luke Skywalker is an exemplar of the spirit of adventure that lives in many men and women—and fades and dies in many more.

A moisture farmer by trade, a space pilot by inclination, Skywalker is swept into cataclysmic conflicts beyond even his own wildest visions, as he finds himself a key to the destruction of Imperial forces personified by the deadly Darth Vader—the man who killed Luke's father.

Luke is scared but dauntless, unsure but determined, skilled but with much to learn. His victories surprise and delight him, add to his sense of accomplishment, contribute to the man he is becoming. ★

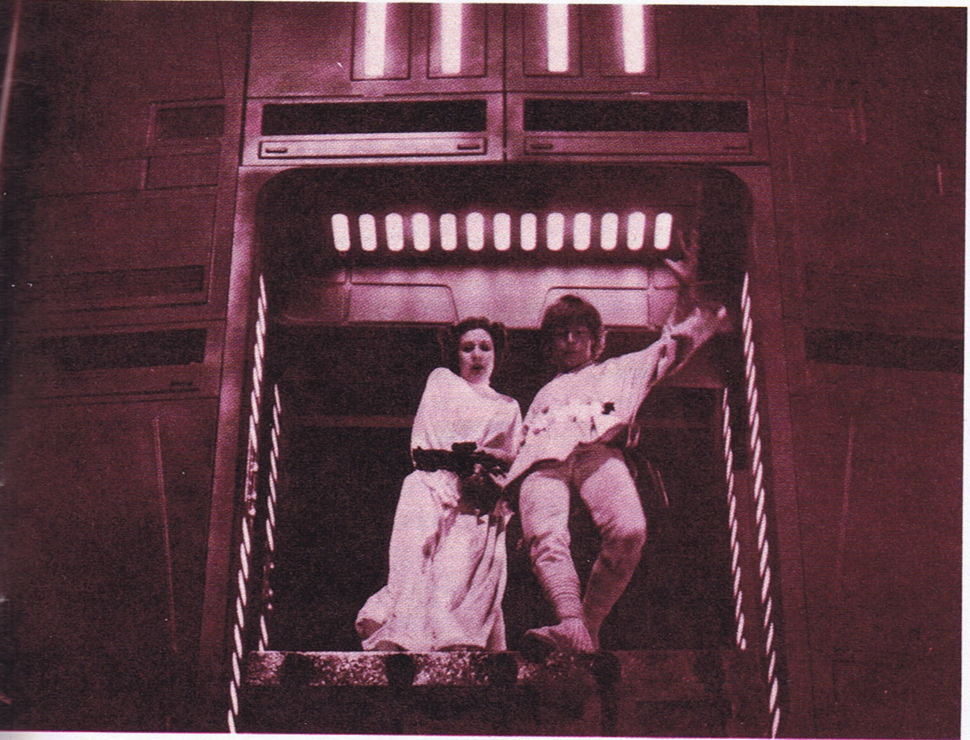


Top: Luke Skywalker aboard the Millennium Falcon *doing battle with the Imperial forces. Above: Luke contemplates his future outside his Uncle's farm on Tatooine.*

HAN SOLO

The roguish Solo—smuggler, pirate and entrepreneur—retains, through his cynicism, a capacity for friendship—though it seems his mercenary heart will lead him to abandon the rebel cause just when he is most needed.

Daring, bold—and gallant deep down where it counts—Solo is every person's hope that in an intolerable society, one can not merely survive but flourish—though it takes circumventing the established order to do so. ★



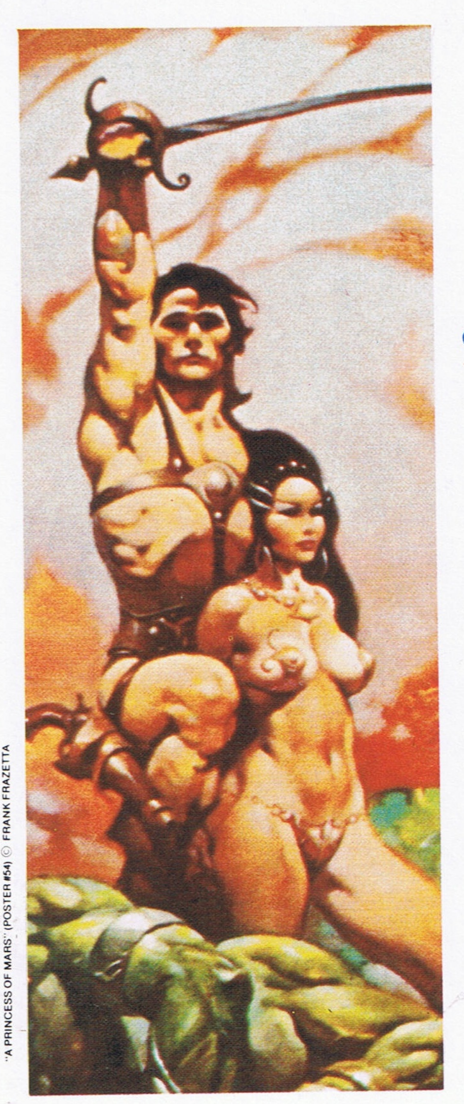
Top: Han Solo, the heroic mercenary, aboard his ship, the Millennium Falcon.
Above: Luke and Leia on the edge of the power shaft.

PRINCESS LEIA ORGANA

She will never knowingly betray her people," says her murderous but admiring enemy. He sums up her conspicuous strength: moral certainty.

Her cause is absolutely right; therefore her efforts on its behalf are audacious and unceasing.

Freedom for the Galaxy takes precedence over even her own survival; and she brings grim courage and a bright intellect to her dangerous tasks. ★


"A PRINCESS OF MARS" (POSTER #54) © FRANK FRAZETTA

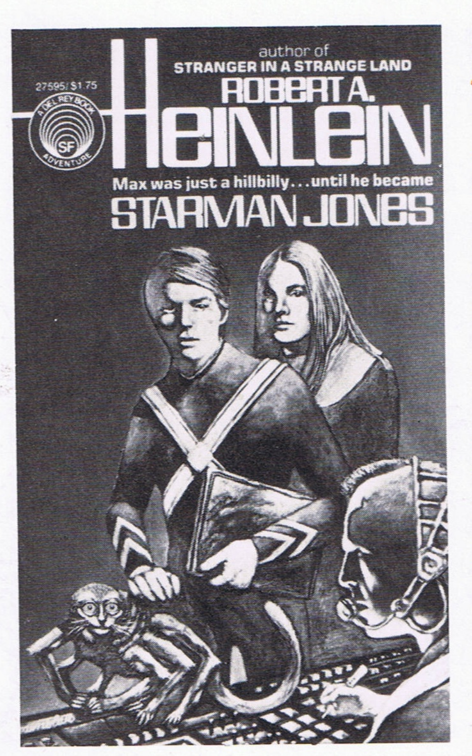
JOHN CARTER

"I do not believe that I am made of the stuff which constitutes heroes," John Carter disclaims in *A Princess of Mars*, "because, in all the hundreds of instances that my voluntary acts have placed me face to face with death, I cannot recall a single one where any alternative step to that I took occurred to me until many hours later . . . However that may be, I have never regretted that cowardice is not optional to me."

Yet Carter's intuitive readiness for action is precisely his badge of heroism.

Carter—in one hour a captain in the Confederate Army, in the next a naked man stranded on an arid Martian plain—is always the calculating military engineer. On Mars, he allies himself with the benevolent Empire in their struggles against barbarian hordes, proves himself superhuman in the light gravity and invigorating air of Mars, and carves an important niche for himself in that most foreign of lands.

However efficacious his plotting and planning, it is his surprising sudden actions that distinguish him—and reveal his deep and profound conviction that anything of value is worth fighting for—with not a second to waste in useless deliberation. ★



STARMAN JONES

By learning to create his own luck, by choosing the best among equally unsatisfactory alternatives, by never losing sight of his dream, Max Jones conquers a hostile establishment and realizes his goal.

Max lives in a world plagued by unemployment and ruled by labor guilds. To acquire a chosen job, one must somehow inherit membership in the guild in question; but Max's uncle dies before he can name Max his successor in the Astrogator's Guild. Max's hopes of becoming an astrogator all but die, too.

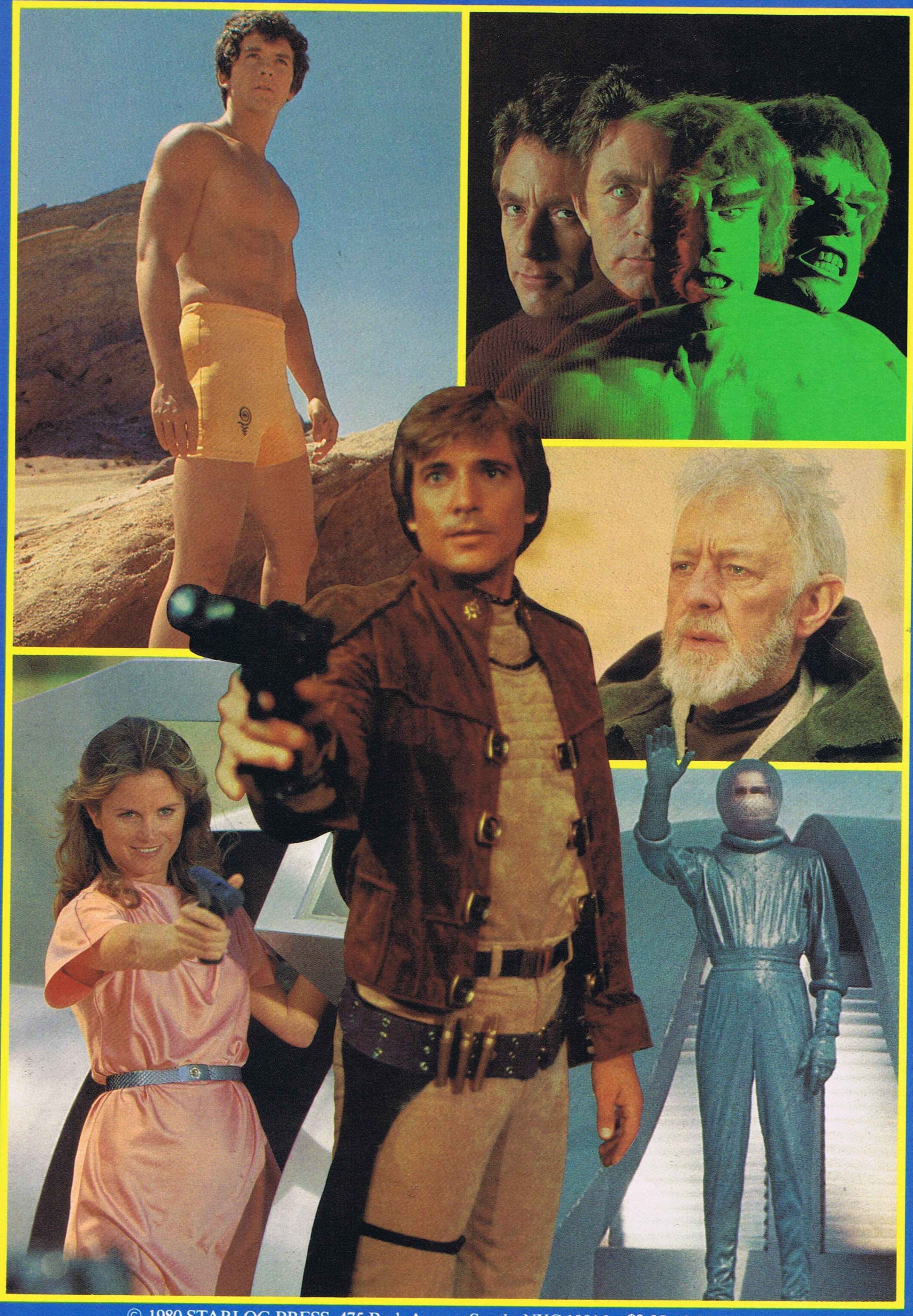
But not quite. With forged papers, Max takes a menial job on a starship. When his special talent for mathematics attracts attention, he finds himself assisting the chartsman on the ship. Finally—by being in the right place at the right time—he fills in as astrogator. His dream has come true! At any moment, however, it can all collapse around him—if anyone examines his papers too closely. He considers jumping ship while he is ahead; instead, he opts to trust his abilities—and trust that his expertise will cause his superiors to bend the rules in his favor.

Ultimately, he wins his anxious gamble; in so doing, he admirably demonstrates the importance of genuine skill over matters of politics and pull. ★

INDEX

Titles

Names



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